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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/776,839

02/11/2004

Ludwig Busam

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27752 7590 04/20/2007

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EXAMINER

BOGART, MICHAEL G

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3761

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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3 MONTHS

04/20/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/776,839	Applicant(s) BUSAM ET AL.	
	Examiner Michael G. Bogart	Art Unit 3761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 February 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12 August 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

Claim 1 is objected to because of the following informalities:

In line 14, after “second surface of”, delete --the--.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. § 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

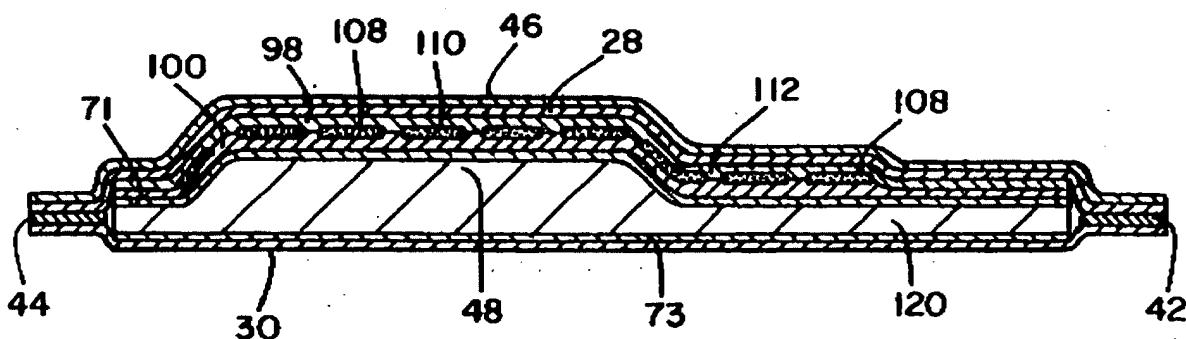
(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-5, 7 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tanzer *et al.* (US 5,425,725 A; hereinafter “Tanzer”).

Regarding claim 1, Tanzer teaches an absorbent core (32) useful for an absorbent article (10) comprising a substrate layer (100), said substrate layer (100) comprising a first surface and a second surface, said absorbent core (32) further comprising a discontinuous layer of absorbent material (110), said absorbent material (110) comprising an absorbent polymer material, said absorbent material optionally comprising an absorbent fibrous material and said absorbent fibrous material not representing more than about 20 weight percent of the total weight of the absorbent polymer material (110), said discontinuous layer of absorbent material (110) comprising a first surface and a second surface, said absorbent core (32) further comprising a

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layer of thermoplastic material (98), said layer of thermoplastic material (98) comprising a first surface and a second surface wherein said second surface of said discontinuous layer of absorbent material (110) is in at least partial contact with said first surface of said substrate layer (100) and wherein portions of said second surface of said layer of thermoplastic material (98) are in direct contact with said first surface of said substrate layer (100) and portions of said second surface of said layer of thermoplastic material (98) are in direct contact with said first surface of said discontinuous layer of absorbent material (110)(col. 13, lines 45-61; col. 26, line 46-col. 27, line 28)(see fig. 2, infra).

**FIG. 2**

Regarding the fibrous material, this limitation is recited as optional, and the limitation is herein interpreted as being optional and not required for the reference to anticipate the claim.

Regarding claim 2, Tanzer teaches that the thermoplastic material includes a hot melt adhesive (col. 40, lines 61-68; col. 43, lines 43-50).

Regarding claims 3 and 4, Tanzer teaches that the thermoplastic material is fiberized and/or net-like (col. 13, lines 45-61).

Regarding claim 5, Tanzer teaches that the absorbent polymer includes particles (col. 27, lines 20-28).

Regarding claim 7, Tanzer teaches at least two substrate layers (46, 100).

Regarding claim 9, Tanzer teaches at least one substrate layer (100) and one cover layer (28, 46).

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. § 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 6, 8 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanzer.

Tanzer does not expressly disclose the specifically claimed ranges of basis weight or performance vectors.

Optimization of ranges of parameters within prior art ranges or through routine experimentation is not sufficient to patentably distinguish the invention over the prior art. MPEP

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§ 2144.05. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that increasing the basis weight of absorbent material would increase the absorbent capacity of the absorbent core, while reducing it would result in less cost or bulkiness. One of ordinary skill in the art would have also recognized that minimizing the strike through time would result in faster absorption of liquid in the finished product. Additionally, one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized the benefit of optimizing the hydrophilicity of various layers depending on their function as uptake, surge management or retention. Thus these parameters are result-effective variables and as such, it would have been obvious to optimize them.

Response to Arguments

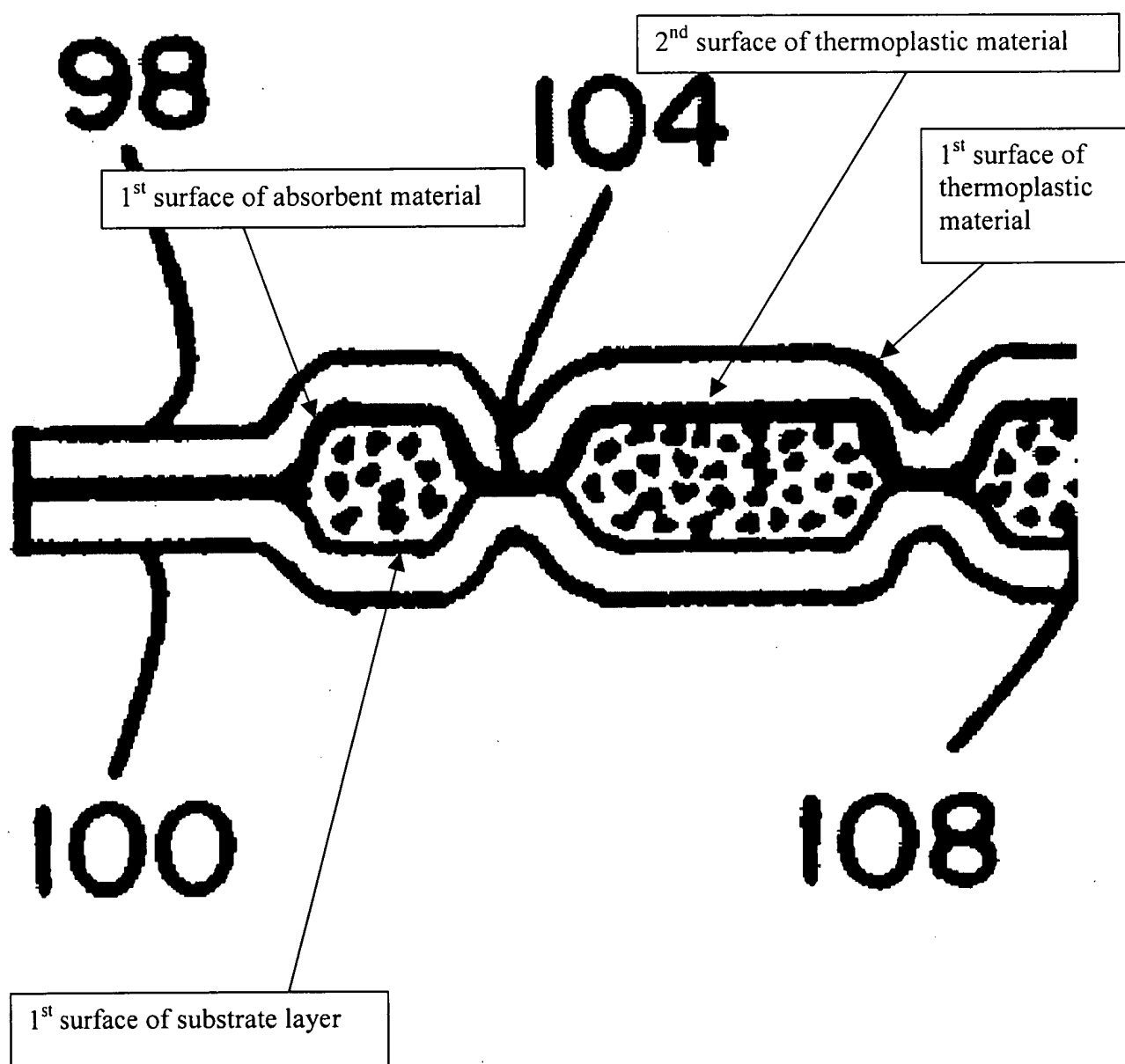
Applicant's arguments filed 05 February 2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants assert that Tanzer does not teach a layer of thermoplastic material comprising a first surface and a second surface wherein portions of the second surface of the layer of thermoplastic material are in direct contact with the first surface of the substrate layer and portions of the second surface of the layer of thermoplastic material are in direct contact with the first surface of the discontinuous layer of absorbent material.

This argument is not persuasive because Tanzer discloses a layer of thermoplastic material (98) comprising a first surface and a second surface wherein portions of the second surface of the layer of thermoplastic material (98) are in direct contact (104) with the first surface of the substrate layer (100) and portions of the second surface of the layer of thermoplastic

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material (98) are in direct contact with the first surface of the discontinuous layer of absorbent material (110)(see annotated section of figure 7, infra).



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Applicants assert that Tanzer's carrier layer (98) is not the same as the thermoplastic layer of the instantly claimed invention. This argument is not persuasive because Tanzer disclose that layer (98) can include thermoplastic material (col. 13, lines 51-61).

In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., the thermoplastic layer of the instant invention does not act as a carrier layer, the two substrate layers do not contact each other) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael Bogart whose telephone number is (571) 272-4933.

In the event the examiner is not available, the Examiner's supervisor, Tatyana Zalukaeva may be reached at phone number (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300 for formal communications. For informal communications, the direct fax to the Examiner is (571) 273-4933.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-3700.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Michael Bogart
12 April 2007



TOM BARRETT
PRIMARY EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700